

ESTAFETA

Newsletter of the ASIA-PACIFIC CONFERENCE ON EAST TIMOR

June 4, 1994

FOURTH DAY RECAP

The morning of the APCET fourth day was devoted mainly by knowing our "beloved" Indonesia by heart. No thanks, to Indonesia for making East Timor and West Papua known to the world by making our Timorese and Papuan brothers and sisters suffer and gnaw in pain. But let the cry of the thousands of innocent children, fathers mothers, relatives, friends and unknown victims of human rights violations in this part of our globe tell us what really has happened to the almost forgotten people of East Timor and West Papua.

What are the reasons behind such Indonesian aggression? What are the effects of such Indonesian occupation to the people of East Timor and West Papua, to the Asia Pacific region, and to the global human community in general? Until when will the Timorese and Papuans suffer due to Indonesian imperialism?

The 5Ws and H (who, what, where, when, how, including how much) of the Indonesian colonization were extensively discussed by the panel of speakers JOHN OTTO ONDAWAME, spokesman for Organisasi Papua Merdeka (Free Papua Movement); the former Australian diplomat in Jakarta, journalist, political commentator and founder of the AKSI-Indonesian Solidarity Network MAX LANE; and Indonesian RASHLAND NASHIDIK himself as the chair of Pusat Informasi Dan Jaringan Aksi Untuk Reformasi (Center for Information and Action Network for Democratic Reforms), an organization formed in 1989 by student activists in Jakarta.

The afternoon session was spent discussing actual solidarity efforts for Free East Timor. INES ALMEIDA shared their work in the East Timor Relief Association (ETRA) and how local and international solidarity groups who wish to help East Timor can help. Likewise, PEDRO PINTO LEITE of the International Platform of Jurists for East Timor (IPJET) discussed their organization's structure, vision, mission, goals and on-going tasks on hand for East Timor. An IPJET book on East Timor will be available soon and an invitation to everyone interested on the East Timor struggle to win US\$1,000 at stake for the lucky East Timor essayist this coming August.

Moreover, to facilitate worldwide information dissemination and cooperative efforts for East Timor, JANE INGLIS and CHARLES SCHEINER of the International Federation for East Timor (IFET) discussed their upcoming activities and the E-mail communication system for a globally coordinated East Timor campaign.

The rest of the afternoon was spent for workshop discussion on three levels of solidarity work for East Timor: local, Asian and International networking. Local participants were divided into two workshop groups: the Lumads, Moro and Indigenous people on one hand, and the NGOs and individuals on the other hand. The workshop groups for Asia and International networking later have decided to merge themselves into one group. The results of the workshop will be reported to us shortly this morning.

A solidarity night culminated the day's event with a display of both obvious and hidden cultural talents from local and foreign participants. With such a display of courage to sing and dance publicly for East Timor, how much more should we all sing and dance together when East Timor has finally won its victory?

**AMI HUSIK ESTAFETA OSA NE'E,
MAIBE AMI HEIN ESTAFETA IDA BO'OT LIU TAN!**

(We are leaving this ESTAFETA,
but we await a bigger ESTAFETA!)

Tomorrow, there will be no more ESTAFETA. As we today witness the curtain call of the Asia-Pacific Conference on East Timor (APCET), we also bid goodbye to our dearly beloved ESTAFETA which served as our voice of freedom for four days. ESTAFETA has served its purpose for the four-day APCET meeting in Manila. And the spirit of ESTAFETA leaves an indelible mark in our hearts. As we now bring the good news of East Timor solidarity to our own homes, we instantly become estafetas or couriers of the good news of liberation for our Timorese brothers and sisters around the globe. As our collective voice of freedom, ESTAFETA has attempted to sum up our daily conference activities in simple terms and form. Just like the real estafetas in East Timor, the children couriers have dared to facilitate communication lines in the war-torn mountains and hills of East Timor. And ESTAFETA, in spite of its simplicity and consciously lacking the minimum standards of an elementary newsletter, has sincerely offered itself to be the voice of APCET.

Who will miss ESTAFETA? Certainly, it's not this two-page paper that we will all miss but the spirit of common humanity that embraced us all during the four-day meeting and the collective history we have made and written together in this two-page paper that will make us all remember ESTAFETA.

Today, ESTAFETA bids you all goodbye and wishes you a safe journey back home. At the same time, ESTAFETA greets you hello as it willingly accepts its greater prophetic mission after APCET: to sow seeds of hope and freedom for East Timor in the hearts of every human being in the Asia Pacific Region and elsewhere in our globe.

Viva ESTAFETA! Viva Timor Leste! La Luta Continua!

SOLIDARITY NIGHT

Solidarity with the suffering people of East Timor assumed a lively tone during the Solidarity Night at PCED yesterday.

APCET participants also took a respite from the hectic conference schedule via a smorgasbord of songs, poems, dances and yes, laughter. The delegates duly represented their countries and brought to this corner of the globe a glimpse of each other's world. The presentations were gifts of hope and friendship to the people of East Timor.

Joel Saracho was the consummate emcee, glib tongued and master of the moment that he is.

Kontra Gapi blasted what little space they had with resonant thumping music. Equipped with kulintang and other Filipino native instrument instead of the usual electric guitars, their music zeroed-in on the contemporary generation and still eager-to-be swinging generation.

The Mindanao delegation unraveled a string of dance and music complete with glittering malongs. Mr. Shambu Chopra of India revealed a romantic streak and rendered a love song that had the crowd both swooning and stomping. A tenor, he was matched only by the deep base voice of John of West Papua. The audience's spirit and exhilaration were reflected by the solidarity songs offered by participants from East Timor, Malaysia, Korea, Nepal, Australia and the Netherlands. Kevin McBride of New Zealand shared a peculiar Irish song and did not forget his brogue. Pedro Pinto Leite, rid of his juror's accouterments, donned a magician's robe and with his bewitching aide, illustrated the correlation between a rope magic trick and the East Timorese struggle. The already queer turn of events took on an even stranger quality as a Bisig and Siglaya alliance produced a song-pantomime that scored big in its objective to succinctly interpret for the foreigners the love song.

And, what would be a night of solidarity if there was not a blood compact ceremony to forever seal the kinship of the delegates? Bahut, (week old duckling fetuses/eggs) were passed around and good sports, as well those duped, partook of this Filipino delicacy (no naming names). However, we must commend Sharon, who, as a representative of Canada coming empty-handed to the evening presentation, paid her debt in full. She will probably never be able to look at a baby duck in the eye again.

Finally, while Grupong Pendong (on tape) sang in the background, everybody willingly scribbled their names and solidarity messages on a large piece of white cloth. The cloth will serve as a solidarity poster of sorts for our East Timorese friends to remember the APCET by. Grupong Pendong graduated into African and Latin beats, dancing proceeded and beer flowed (NASAAN ANG BEER?).

...AND DID YOU KNOW THAT:

....according to well-placed source, APCET got more media mileage than what the Miss Universe beauty pageant enjoyed? The well-placed source, of course, got it from another indisputable source.

....bahut is one Filipino delicacy all foreigners must taste to be really in solidarity with the Filipino? No, you don't know. And you don't want to know. But Sharon Scharfe (ETAN- Canada) knows. Ask her.

1. A Fighter Who Fell

High on the mountain peaks of Timor
The grass grows
And warms the fractured bones
Of a fighter who fell

Down on the grassy plains of Timor
A flower shows
And beautifies the bones
Of a fighter who fell

This is the hopeful life that grows
From life's release
The life that every woman knows
Who calls for peace
With every waking breath
But not the peace of death

Throughout the peaks and plains of Timor
The life-blood flows
And animates the bones
Of the fighters who fell

2. Timor Woman

Timor woman
Manacled by your misery
Timor woman
Your spirit bound in servitude
Timor woman
Forced to bear invaders' children
Timor woman
Raped, abandoned in concentration camps

Timor woman
Your feeble honesty your strength
Your bloodless voice a weapon of war
Your fragile chant the hymn of freedom

Timor woman
Companheira bashed, imprisoned
Your song a cry for justice
Your soul anticipating death

Timor Woman
You weep warm tears of blood
Your blood, our blood
Your face the record of our struggle
Your determination the story of our resistance

Xanana Gusmao, 1991

translated by Agio Pereira and Rob Wesley-Smith

poeticised by Peter Wesley-Smith

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Across the Timor Sea

We fought for our country,
we fought and loved and died;
we wrote of our country,
and sang our songs and died,
and come again, to find in vain
that we have warred across the sea
for promises of decency forgotten.

We cannot hold our heads up high,
we can no more with honest eye
say we did not let them die
across the Timor Sea
when, had they held, our promises
and courage could have saved the lives
of those more brave and trustworthy than we.

Jerry Wesley-Smith

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The Star-Spangled Banner...East Timor Version

Oh say can you see by the dawn's early light,
What so mur'drously seen at the twilight's last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous fight,
From the Broncos it flies, oh so gallantly streaming!
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs killing their share,
Gave proof through the night, that the flag was still there.
Oh say will that Star-Spangled Banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave?

On the shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep,
Where Suharto's poor troops fearfully are reposing,
What is that which the wind o'er the towering steep,
AS it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
In full glory is seen on the hated machines:
It's the Star-Spangled Banner - Oh ne'er shall it triumph
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave!

Oh thus must the children of Timor unite,
Unite to resist winds that blow from the sea.
'Wake! The mountain is light, a new sun does a-rise,
See the dawn of our peace, with the triumph of vict'ry!
As conquer we must, for our cause it is just,
And this be our guide, in our people we trust.
And the star of our flag in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave.

Robert Wesley Smith

July 1978

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